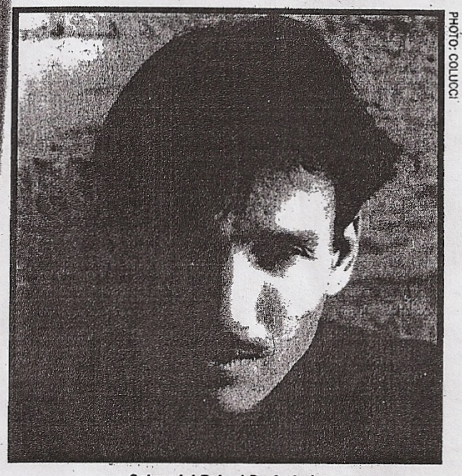
ROBERT DE ANDREIS



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Columnist Robert De Andreis

Eat my journey

by ROBERT DE ANDREIS

The longer people stay on a spiritual path, the more likely it is that they will end up as roadkill. The next person who tells me they are with me every step of the journey, I'm telling to take a hike.

There is no longer a word for what I'm going through at this late stage in my life. There is no longer a comforting concept to define my experience. I've worked too hard to be easily placated by terms that might have worked for me last year. Spiritual trickery no longer seduces me. Crazed fanatics who walk barefoot on glass to demonstrate their faith are fools in search of a good pair of heels.

If I had died two years ago, and I could have, it would have been at the peak of my spiritual ga-ga days, and I would have been able to walk into the light with a straight face. But every year that I'm spared, I'm forced to go beyond the familiar to find new tools to make sense out of a world that doesn't make sense to me any longer.

Today I am bitching about all that phony spirituality among us — those people who read about spirituality in a book (which becomes their bible), and push it on everyone they know. In all my searching, I have never found answers in a book, tape or spiritual workout video. People think that just because they've reached the top of the mountain, their work is done. The key, for all you Miss Spiritual Leaders of 1995, is to get off the spiritual mountain gracefully, before you're blown off by your own hot air. Many spiritual divas du jour lead double lives — mind controlling egomaniacs by day, mind controlling egomaniacs by night!

People betray their false spiritual sides when they get so judgmental about other people's position on the ladder. "Why, if he only read this book," they say "he'd be as unjudgmental as me!" Sometimes I take potshots at others, not because I want to, but because I have to. It's part of my job as a columnist and it just breaks my heart. It's a nasty job, but somebody's got to do it.

In the table of contents of most golden light guide books there are such topics as "Meditation," "Forgiveness" and "Healing." Never have I seen a chapter on "Struggling through intense chronic physical and emotional pan in the midst of a terminal illness with a terrible social stigma as your family and friends pull away from you, despite being a good and loving person all you life."

I'm sorry, but it takes a lot more than lighting a candle and participating in ancient healing rituals to ease my pain, especially when the "ancient" refers to the '70s, when spiritual pop was born and love was all around, no need to fake it. Who can take a nothing day and suddenly make it all seem worthwhile? Well, it's you girl, and you should know it, but if you keep tossing you hat up in the middle of the street, you won't stop traffic, you'll get hit by it.

The highest truths can never be taught, only witnessed by personal experience. A guide is only a recipe — you still have to chew the food yourself. But for some repulsive reason, today's students on the fashionable trek up the hill prefer the predigested opinions of faux spiritual teachers who need to get a life, not a following. But who knows? Maybe other people's vomit tastes better than I imagine.

I love writing blatant trash pieces like this because I'll end up getting a few tear-stained letters from readers, crushed that I would trample through their precious garden and take a dump right between the tulips and daffodils.

"Oh, Robert," they'll say, "what you really need to do is ..." Rip! At the first hint of advice those letters get torn in two and used as ... well, you can imagine. Opinions are like assholes — everyone has one. But quality support is like a big dick — a breath-taking gift from heaven you wish you could get your hands on more often.

If you make a constant commitment to keep growing, you outgrow the things that used to work for you. It's unsettling and most people don't want to work for you. Seeking the truth will not always set you free because sometimes the truth is ugly.

These days, because I'm in such pain and distress, none of my previous tools comfort me anymore. I've come to realize there is no "figuring it all out" and that my search for meaning is a meaningless search.

AIDS, homophobia, human suffering and scary families exist as part of a continuum of the human experience and you did nothing to deserve it. There are no good answers for senseless pain and suffering, only good questions.

When I mentioned a few weeks ago that I didn't want a Catholic service for my memorial, I was not Catholic bashing. It was for a deeper reason. The Catholic Church, like any religion, is not holy enough, not sacred enough, to pay homage to my gay life. How can it give me Last Rites if it can't give me gay rights? The world failed me, my guides ran away and the religion of my family didn't deliver the goods. The Catholic church is not holy enough to bury my ass.

After I die I will curse this planet and hurl it into the black hole if my skinny body is ever laid out in a grisly coffin against my

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wishes. But if it is, by some sick, final act of control by my family, there is not a cathedral magnificent enough to hold me. One truth I've learned on my own: the spiritual journey isn't linear. If you stay on it long enough, you'll realize you're walking in circles. But a deeper truth remains: after I die, I will no longer be in pain, and this fucked up journey, paved with all the assholes I've met along the way, can never hurt me again.

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